

FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE
PANAMA BUREAU
DRAWER 927
APO MIAMI 34004

7 January 1986
MPA-6001

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, Foreign Broadcast Information Service
THROUGH : Acting Chief, Operations Group
SUBJECT : Monthly Report — Panama Bureau — December 1985

I. GENERAL

Work continued apace during the month on the three additional ROSET's at the bureau. The local contractor, Cedeno and Choy, following final surveying for the locations of the antenna bases, began excavation work, including the compacting of backfill. The contractor also began removal of a portion of the chain link fence around the ROSET compound. It will be restored, considerably enlarged, with the completion of the additional ROSET's. The bureau has made the necessary arrangements with GSO for the expediting of hardware for the antennas through Panamanian customs in January.

The bureau received ambassadorial approval for three additional FBN slots: A Spanish monitor, a teletypist, and a radio technician (boardman). Recruiting to fill these slots will begin in late January or early February.

II. OPERATIONS

A. Monitorial/Editorial

In December OAS foreign ministers met in Cartagena, Colombia, for their 14th special assembly meeting. Concurrently in Cartagena, a meeting of the Contadora Group was also held. Before the OAS meeting, Nicaragua announced it would not participate in the planned Contadora meeting because its request for the inclusion of a new clause in a draft Contadora document had not received sufficient attention. Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto did not attend the OAS Cartagena meeting that was attended by U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz.

Polemics flared between the United States and Nicaragua led by an accusation by Secretary Shultz of links between Managua and the Colombian M-19 guerrilla organization. The bureau filed several items reporting Nicaragua's vehement denial of the allegation.

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In Guatemala, the followup presidential election to the 3 November general election was held on 8 December. As expected, Christian Democrat candidate Vinicio Cerezo Arevalo defeated Union of the National Center candidate Jorge Carpio Nicolle. Cerezo, who will officially assume office on 14 January, began naming future members of his cabinet on 27 December.

In mid-December, Salvadoran guerrillas proposed a holiday truce with government forces. The proposal, originally rejected by the Salvadoran Armed Forces, was later accepted by the government on 24 December. Accusations by both sides of violations, however, were common throughout the truce period.

A "March for Peace" organized by U.S., European and Latin American supporters of the Nicaraguan regime received a large amount of coverage during the month. The march, scheduled to begin in Panama and work its way north to Mexico, began encountering problems almost from the onset, when the marchers were harassed and stoned in Costa Rica, the second country on the seven-nation tour. In Nicaragua, as expected, the marchers received a heroes' welcome at every major town, and President Daniel Ortega delivered a speech praising the marchers at a welcome rally in Managua. The march bogged down at Nicaragua's northern border when both El Salvador and Honduras banned the marchers from entering.

B. Communications

Work on the bureau communications upgrade known as the MUX plan was suspended after the Army team performing the installation work experienced trouble because of their unfamiliarity with our equipment. The Army team hopes to return in January or February to continue work on our new system. In the interim we have asked for and received wiring diagrams of Okinawa's Mode I system which is identical to the equipment the Army team is trying to install here. We hope the schematics from Okinawa will expedite the installation process once the Army team returns.

C. Technical

During the month, the bureau procured locally the following:

- Toyota Cressida XL station wagon, color Silver, 4 cylinders, Motor No. 21R-0534664, placed into operation 16 Dec 1985.
Price: \$9,325.00.

- Bookcase, Rosewood, Mod Radius, with wooden doors and shelves.
Price: \$448.00.

III. ADMINISTRATION

A. Personnel

Five local employees received promotions effective 22 December: Spanish monitors [redacted] (to FBN 9/1) and [redacted] (to FBN 7/1); cruising monitor [redacted] (to FBN 6/1); and radio technicians [redacted] (to FBN 4/1).

Teletypists [redacted] and [redacted] received \$300 cash awards for their superior

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performances handling recent communications problems. The awards were handed out during the annual Christmas party, sponsored by the Social Activities Committee, at El Panama Hotel on 14 December.

B. Building and Grounds

STAT Contractor [] completed the first mowing of the antenna field.

IV. VISITS

STAT Nicaraguan press contractor [] visited the bureau on 6 December, en route from Rio to Managua. On the 17th, Salvadoran radio contractor [] visited the bureau during private travel in Panama. Both contractors were briefed on bureau operations and introduced to NEFAX machines, which we hope to have at all remote sites in the near future.

STAT [] who had been on extensive editorial TDY in Asuncion, visited the bureau on 16 December for a ROSET briefing in preparation for his upcoming MOD assignment.

STAT Two Department of the Army civilians, []
STAT [], spent the week of 16 December at the bureau for familiarization.

STAT On 12 December, Headquarters security officer []
STAT accompanied by PDG security officer [] visited the bureau for a
STAT briefing and walkthrough. This was [] first visit to an FBIS installation.

The deputy bureau chief briefed two SOUTHCOM J-2 watch officers on 19 December. The briefing included a walkthrough of the bureau.

STAT Staff cruising officer [] and local cruising monitor
STAT [] were in Costa Rica 1-6 December for a planned survey of Nicaraguan transmitters. Due to an equipment-delivery snafu, the cruisers were unable to proceed with the survey. It is now rescheduled for late January.

V. COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

STAT Keeping up a long tradition, communications operator []
STAT [] collected clothing, toys, and snacks from bureau personnel to provide a Christmas Party for underprivileged children on Saturday 21 December. Bureau monitors []
STAT [] helped distribute the gifts and fare to close to fifty children from the Calzada Larga area on the Transisthmian highway. The highlight of the event was a special presentation by Santa — very aptly portrayed by [] — who made his appearance in a 4-wheel drive, far more appropriate to Panama's climate and terrain than a reindeer-drawn sleigh.

[]
Chief, Panama Bureau, FBIS

Attachment:
Production Report